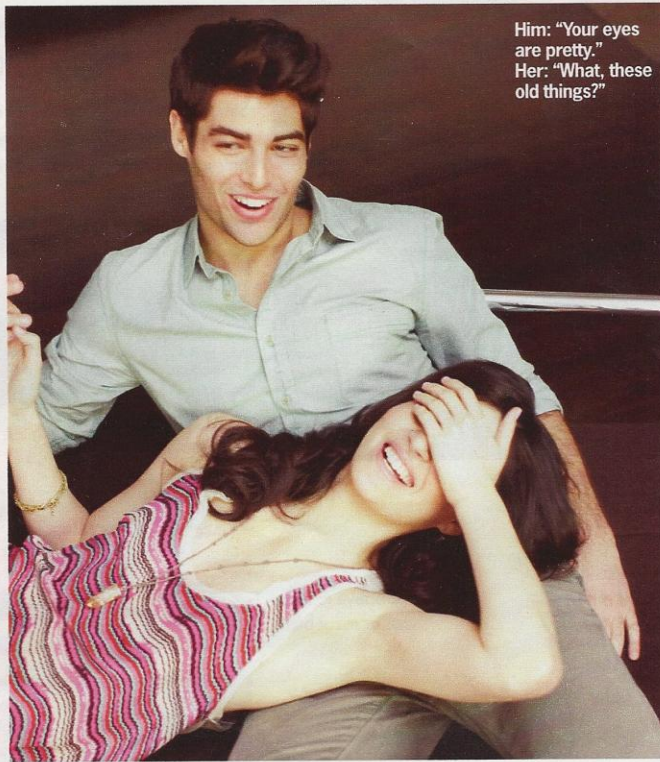


Why Can't You Just Accept a Compliment?



Him: "Your eyes are pretty."
Her: "What, these old things?"

With your female friends, casually brushing off flattery is normal conversation, but it's a serious lust buster when you do it to a guy. Our male writer fills us in.

BY STREETER SEIDELL

▶ The thing about guys is we're total braggarts, especially around other dudes. In fact, typical man banter is made up mostly of boasting...which is partially why we're so flummoxed by what I like to call compliment keep-away, that game you play with your girlfriends. You know what I mean: "I love your dress!" "Please, it's a total knockoff." And not only is it mystifying, but it's also completely off-putting when you let this little habit drift into conversation with us. In fact, we hate it.

What Dudes Hear

When you bat down our compliments, it actually creates an awkward, uncomfortable moment for us. Like when we

say you cooked a delicious meal, and you retort with "Eh, it's okay." Or if we rave, "Wow, you look great!" and you quip: "My hair's being weird." How are we supposed to respond? We can try to keep complimenting you, to no avail, or we can agree with you. Talk about a lose-lose situation.

This silly conversational quirk actually trains us to stop giving you praise. And even worse: The more you keep insisting our compliments aren't accurate, the more we'll begin to believe you. Then the next time you shoo away one of our observations, we may realize that, yeah, you do always overcook chicken, and come to think of it, your hair did look better yesterday. Thanks for pointing it out! That's the real damage this behavior does: It changes our perception of you from amazing to ordinary...and maybe even kind of a drag.

Brag More, Please

There's nothing as sexy as hearing a woman boost herself up, even if she's saying something as unsexy sounding as "I just *owned* that parallel-parking job!" Not to mention, it makes us feel chivalrous when you appreciate our compliments rather than brush them off. So please ditch the praise shield when you're with us. Because the truth is, we really do think you're awesome, or we wouldn't say it. Take a moment to think—have you ever heard guys tossing out flattery just for the hell of it? Half the time you women are pissed we *haven't* complimented your new haircut or whatever. So when we say it, we really mean it...and we want you to know it. ■

CHRIS CLINTON: Fashion editor: Charles Manning; Hair: Cesar Ramirez at Top 5 Management for Reiken; Makeup: Jordy Poon at Bryan Bantry for Lancôme; Model: Vito; Photo: Michael Leitz; Editorial: Joe; (On back) Book: Joe Bonelli at ManVice; Headshot: Jessica Lian; (On him) Shirt: Life After Death; Jeans: Adriano Goldschmied